

FIAE 1

This chapter was mainly focused on differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction can mean a lot of things but it is essentially the manner in which you provide different ways for students to succeed in your classroom. This can range from giving a student extra time on his or her homework to how you set up your classroom physically. The idea is essentially to make sure that all of your students with their own unique wide spectrums of understanding and needs are being addressed in some way. I think when we look concepts like this as students we begin to feel overwhelmed with the idea of trying assess and address all student's needs, as that might sound idealistic. I think when dealing with concepts like this it is important that we don't conflate ideals with expectations, that is to say while we are learning to address "all" needs we will never have a class where every need of every student is 100% met. The goal is to cast as wide of a net as possible in terms of instruction so that no student is left to struggle without any attempt to address that struggle by the teacher. This concept is something that I would hope would be common sense for us before we ever decided to becoming education majors but is of obvious importance nonetheless. If we have a rigid unadaptable model as teachers not only are we likely to lose our jobs (if we could even get one), we would be reaching a very narrow concentration of students. Differentiated instruction helps us to avoid alienating students which would have the potential to reinforce student's feelings of inadequacy and/or engagement with the material.

FIAE chapter 2

The main point in this chapter seemed to be the distinction between mastery of material as opposed to simply memorizing it. The concept of having mastery of any material is that you have a full understanding of the material and you can apply it. For example if I wrote this reflection using only examples from the reading then one might rightly question my mastery of the reading on mastery because I could not make my own connections with the material. It has been proven time and time again that making deeper connections or associations with material is going to lead to lasting knowledge as we can remember things that we've learned from 10 years ago because of certain associations we made at the time. Conversely how many things do we have lasting memories of where the connection starts and ends with "well I had to do a test so I read all the answers right before class"? This is why it is of paramount importance that students understand why they're learning something. If students are given context to the content they're trying to learn they are much more likely to make connections with the material and hopefully end up with a mastery understanding of the material. Having this kind of understanding will be of far more service to them as they go on throughout their education especially when compared to the long term merit of the memorization and regurgitation of facts.

FIAE Chapter 3

The overarching theme of this chapter was surrounding assessment, how to use it ,and what it can tell us. One concept it talked about was pre-assessment which is essentially a way to gauge entry knowledge on a given topic. By understanding where students are when entering

a class, teachers are then better equipped to find methods to accurately address the student's needs. This concept of using assessment as a tool is consistent throughout the chapter. As students we often look at any type of failure when being assessed as something to be ashamed of or something that will be met with a penalty, as teachers it's important to avoid fostering this kind of learning environment. If a teacher gives a test to assess a classes' understanding of material and the entire class does poorly in a certain area or even on the entire test the teacher can use that as an indicator that they aren't doing an effective job in conveying the material to their students. Individual struggles in assessment can be an effective indicator of changes that can be made by the educator to better help their students as well. If some part of the material is not clear to a particular student and there are patterns of struggle with assessment you can speak with the individual student and discuss strategies to better help the student understand the content. I think making the distinction of using assessment as a means to better understand a classes' grip of the material vs as exclusively a means to grade students is an important one to make.

FIAE 4

This chapter goes over three different methods of assessment portfolios, rubrics, and self-assessment. Each of these have a place in the classroom, but the two that stuck out to me specifically were portfolios and self-assessment. Portfolios intrigued me because not only are they a great way for students to measure progress and visualize their growth and hard work, but it also is a great way of introducing organization into the classroom. As someone who is not necessarily geared toward organization I will try to welcome any opportunity for bringing those aspects into my classroom as I come across. By making students catalog their work not only would I be giving them the opportunity to view their work as a collective, but hopefully broadening my own horizons as a multi-faceted educator. In addition to portfolios I also thought self assessment was an interesting method to use in the classroom. I think it's important student's look at their own work critically and don't just feel they can hand it in and forget about it. I think this could definitely play into using portfolios, when students look at all of their work put together they can assess how far they have come in the class and maybe about what goals they were or weren't able to reach. I personally don't see these methods as exclusive and I could see myself employing all three and probably many others in my future classroom.

FIAE 5

This chapter focused largely on the concept of tiering. Basically as teachers we should try to be flexible with the difficulty of our content so we can reach all learners. For students deemed to be in the lower tier they are given less challenging material that would be appropriate for the pace they're learning at. The middle tier which would typically comprise the majority of the class would be given material that is moderately challenging, and the top tier would be given the most challenging work. I think this strategy while on the surface sounds like a great way to keep all students engaged it could also run into some issues. First, how do I determine which student belongs in which tier? If a student happens to not be engaged when I choose to gauge

their levels he or she could potentially be receiving work far below a challenging level for them all year which could potentially make them even less engaged. In addition students could likely realize pretty quickly that there are different levels and may feel singled out or inadequate. Perhaps even students in the upper tier may feel it's not fair that they are receiving more difficult work. While I do like the concept of having students feel appropriately challenged I think there could be problems with imposing a tier system. An alternative could be having individual conferences with students to gauge their comfort level with the material and give them a choice for either a less challenging or more challenging option.

FIAE 6

This chapter talked about test questions and how to make them accessible essentially. Basically this chapter served as a reminder that our job as teachers when we make tests is not to trap students into getting the wrong answer but rather to assess their understanding of the content. That is why it is important to try to be as clear as possible when wording a question so that students have very little opportunity to misinterpret the meaning of the question. Again the purpose of the test is to give students the opportunity to show their understanding of the content not to show how carefully they can read and understand what the question is asking of them. This is partially why I liked the idea of giving students oral exams rather than written exams. By having the opportunity to clarify their train of thought or the process they used to come to an answer I can more accurately assess their understanding of the material as opposed to just seeing that they answered a multiple choice question wrong. I also felt that being given the opportunity to explain why you chose an answer on a multiple choice question could be really effective. Not only would it be helpful for me as a teacher to know their thought process when answering the question, but it would also give them the opportunity to think about why they chose the answer that they did and potentially change it. Perhaps being forced to explain their own thinking would reveal that they chose an answer too quickly and did not take the time to fully understand the question.